



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

advantages,—through so much toil and privation,—what may she not become, with her resources fully developed by an industrious population, under the guidance of minds educated and disciplined in so noble a school as her State University?

We take leave of this subject at a time when the whole nation is pausing in dread suspense for the issue of a political storm, which threatens to shake, if not to overthrow, the principles upon which we have attained our magnificent growth, and, through these, the cause of liberty throughout the world. The ancient landmarks may be removed, and strife and bitterness follow the breaking up of former restraints; but whatever may be the event, Michigan, from her geographical and political position, has an important part to play in the future, and it is for her well-wishers to hope that her past career of trial and experience, and her present high aims and enlarged views, may enable her to discharge to the full her duties and responsibilities.

---

ART. XI.—1. *Currents and Counter-Currents in Medical Science. With other Addresses and Essays.* By OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, Parkman Professor of Anatomy and Physiology in Harvard University, late Physician in the Massachusetts General Hospital, Member of the Society for Medical Observation at Paris, Fellow of the Massachusetts Medical Society, Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.\* Boston: Ticknor and Fields. 1861. 12mo. pp. 406.

2. *Another Letter to a Young Physician: to which are appended some other Medical Papers.* By JAMES JACKSON, M. D., Professor Emeritus of the Theory and Practice of Medicine in Harvard University. Boston: Ticknor and Fields. 1861. 16mo. pp. 179.

IT is by no means an insignificant fact, that *wit* and *wisdom* come from the same root; they represent the same knowing

---

\* We hope that, when Dr. Holmes publishes another book, he will omit most of

faculty as directed toward different classes of objects. They are often found together, and made to play into each other's hands ; and, where this is not the case, the possession of the one always implies a capacity for the other. The man who can neither make nor take a joke may be hugely bibliovorous ; but he has as little discernment as to the quality of his food as belongs to the more gluttonous orders of brutes. On the other hand, we have known dunces by birthright, who were greedy absorbents of wit, who could even repeat a witticism without destroying its point, nay, who might aspire even to the creation of a bad pun ; but no dunce ever spun from his own brain that which was worthy of a healthful laugh. All knowledge consists in an acquaintance with the resemblances and the differences between objects ; it is a quick and keen perception of those resemblances and differences that constitutes both wisdom and wit. Wisdom contemplates them scientifically ; wit views them pictorially. But there is often room for both in the very same instance of resemblance between things unlike, or of unlikeness between things similar ; a fact in science not seldom admitting of a grotesque representation or statement, while a witticism frequently involves a truth capable of the gravest logical expression. Thus there is extant a Comic Latin Grammar, which, without ever ceasing to be witty, omits not a single fundamental principle or law appertaining to the Latin tongue ; and John Phœnix's Lectures on Astronomy state none but scientific facts, yet state them in a form intensely comic and ludicrous.

The union of wit and wisdom in the same mind has been called in question in some memorable historical instances. In our boyhood we were introduced into Greek literature by a most attractive series of Hibernianisms—pardon the anachronism — from the *'Αστεῖα* of Hierocles, — the same Hierocles, we always supposed, who wrote a Commentary on the Golden Verses of Pythagoras, as also a treatise in seven books on Providence, Fate, and Free-Will. This “Joe Miller,” which

---

his titles. A short man sometimes uses blocks of this description to make himself look tall ; but a dwarfish stature is the only apology for what puts the pen of a friendly reviewer to needless trouble, and awakens vindictive feeling in an else indifferent critic.

seems to have been a repertory of traditional jokes and *sottises*, no doubt with many never published before, used to be printed as an appendix to the Neo-Platonist's Commentary on Pythagoras. The jokes are good ; the *sottises* are admirably told ; the internal evidence inclines us to believe that they came from the philosopher's hand : but we are now gravely assured, on what would be the highest authority were it sustained by any other than alleged internal evidence, that they are "obviously the production of a very insignificant person." By parity of reasoning, in some classical dictionary of the twenty-ninth century, our posterity will doubtless learn that the author of certain erudite and eloquent addresses and treatises on medical science was "obviously" *not* the writer of "The Dorchester Giant" and "My aunt ! my dear unmarried aunt !" but that these last are to be ascribed to an "insignificant" Oliver Wendell Holmes, of unknown origin and indefinite antiquity.

Yet we are not without undisputed instances in ancient and modern literature of precisely the combination of the grave and gay in authorship, which is denied in the case of Hierocles. Julius Caesar's collection of good sayings and jokes, many of them his own, — " *Dicta Collectanea*," — extended through several volumes. Lord Bacon's " *Apophthegms*" were evidently gathered and recorded with a zest not inferior to that with which he pursued his labors in the new philosophy ; and in his " *Advancement of Learning*" he says of these pointed sayings: " They serve not for pleasure only and ornament, but also for action and business ; being, as one called them, *mucrones verborum*, — speeches with a point or edge, whereby knots in business are pierced and severed. And as former occasions are continually recurring, that which served once will often serve again, either produced as a man's own or cited as of ancient authority." The biographer of grim old Joseph Mede, the famous commentator on the Apocalypse, has a special section entitled, " Of his becoming Facetiousness," which he commences by saying: " Those his so grave, knotty, and crabbed studies did not at all render him Sour or Morose, but in due Time and Place he knew how to be Pleasant and Facetious." To verify this he records three good witticisms, and, having whetted his reader's appetite, goes on to

say: "To these might be added many more ; whereof some would perhaps taste a little too salt to some, but all of them would relish well enough to younger Palats." We cannot close this heterogeneous list of worthies without adding stern John Foster, who professed never to sacrifice to the Graces, but who, when vexed or indignant, was always maddened into caustic wit, and from whom his biographers have preserved two of the most keen, scathing, withering jokes to which human lips ever gave utterance.

We have said these things not because there is the slightest need of saying them anywhere within that microcosm — commonly called the world — of which Boston is the luminous centre ; all who dwell within *our* world know that Dr. Holmes, while second to none among those who are wits by the double tenure of birthright and culture, holds by universal suffrage a no less distinguished place in his profession, — in its science and its literature, as a knower and a teacher, in the humanities which constitute it a liberal calling, and in the practical wisdom which alone can utilize genius and learning. The volume before us consists for the most part of discourses prepared primarily for medical students or practitioners ; but the terseness and epigrammatic point of the style, the clearness and precision of the thought and reasoning, and the magnitude of the subjects discussed, cannot fail to attract cultivated readers outside of the profession. We propose to give some account of the book, with extracts from it, before we close. But we wish at the outset to say a few words in vindication of the regular Faculty of Medicine against the invasions on their province and the assaults on their trustworthiness made at the present day by the multiplied and diverse forms of quackery.

We should not have deemed this subject worthy the grave consideration of a literary journal half a century ago, when quackery found ready receptivity chiefly with such persons as literature never reached. But it now numbers its abettors in every walk of life, and as large a proportion, we apprehend, among the cultivated as among the ignorant. We are especially grieved, yet not surprised, to find that the clergy lend themselves with peculiar facility to the various forms of irregular practice. Their countenance is eagerly sought by venders

of patent medicines and other adventurers in the healing art, and every possible device is employed to force experiments on them and their families, and to procure from them attestations and recommendations. As educated and thinking men, they place great reliance on their own powers of reasoning and judgment; while from their conversance with the sick and suffering, and their earnest desire to relieve distress and create happiness, they are led to urge on those within their sphere of influence whatever remedies or modes of treatment have seemed successful. There is, however, but one standard of judgment to which they are qualified to make appeal; and that is the plausible but delusive standard of apparent results on a very small scale. They reason inductively from individual cases; but the science of medicine is too vast and complicated for the experience of one man, or a few, or even of a single generation, to furnish sufficient premises for general conclusions. Induction on too narrow a basis of facts is less safe than conjecture; for common sense enters largely into the latter process, while it is eliminated from the former, and in no department of knowledge is it more thoroughly eliminated than in that now under consideration.

There are various reasons why the inductions of an unscientific observer are of no worth in medical matters. In the first place, the relation of antecedent and consequent is not necessarily that of cause and effect. Many diseases are self-limited, some as to intensity, some as to time; and though their course may be shortened or their severity mitigated by judicious treatment, they will at all events leave the patient in due season. Where there is no organic lesion, and where the vital functions have not yet yielded to natural decay, the tendency is toward recovery, not toward death. The unaffected portions of the system, by their healthy action, are gradually working for the restoration of the diseased portion. The *vis medicatrix* of nature is the wise physician's chief ground of confidence, and he aims to help and expedite, not to supersede its operation. But through its energy many more recoveries than fatal cases occur under any and every system of treatment, and under every system there are not infrequent instances of sudden, surprising, unexpected restoration. The most absurd and barbarous modes

of practice may be defended by authentic and strong statistical arguments. We could on this ground vindicate the Thomsonian practice, which we believe to be dangerous in the extreme, and as likely as any device not of murderous intent to frustrate all hope of recovery, yet which in iron constitutions is sometimes followed by astonishingly favorable results.

Then, again, let it be considered that the very fact that any system has practitioners and subjects is a proof that it sometimes seems to work well. A system which always killed its patients could not survive its second year. Nor yet is it conceivable that any mode of treatment should not in some peculiar cases be useful, nay, the best mode practicable. The hands of the motionless clock point right twice in the day. The Procrustes' bed of the one-idea or one-remedy practitioner must occasionally receive patients whose measure it precisely fits; and, if there are systems which really do neither good nor harm, there are undoubtedly many cases in which it is best that nothing should be done.

Some of the more violent modes of practice probably owe their occasional efficacy not to any specific adaptation, but to their very violence. They give a shock to the system, perilous no doubt, yet which may set the internal *vis medicatrix* vigorously at work. A dose of lobelia or a *douche* bath may thus effect the cure of a complaint for which it is as far as possible from being a specific, and for which a whipping or a sudden fright would have answered the same purpose. A scientific physician once told us, in speaking of a chronic invalid, that she probably would never leave her chamber; but added, "Should her house take fire in the night, and she be obliged to escape for her life, she would recover at once." The Chinese practice of medicine consists of a series of violent and seemingly aimless onslaughts on the patient, and yet recovery takes place under it often enough to sustain the profession in good credit.

Diet and regimen are under all systems often more efficacious than medicine, and the regular practice has frequent injustice done to it from the fact, that in connection with it injunctions of this class are much less heeded than under other systems. The dyspeptic applies to an allopathic physician,

who prescribes some slight remedy or none, but tells the patient what and how much he may eat, and what he must not eat. The rules are transgressed every day; the patient grows worse, and jumps at the conclusion that his medical adviser knew nothing about his case. He goes to a homœopathist, who gives him infinitesimal doses of sulphur or charcoal, and tells him that they will be worse than useless unless he adheres to a complicated, yet salutary, system of observances and abstинences in the matter of food. The air of mystery given to the process appeals to a certain superstitious feeling; the man obeys, straightway recovers, and is thenceforward a propagandist of the school of Hahnemann, while all that he needed was an equally obedient spirit under the regime first prescribed. Another patient is suffering from a disease of the nerves. His family physician prescribes early rising, much fresh air and vigorous exercise, together with medicines, on which he lays no independent stress. The medicine is taken; the directions are at first half followed, and in a few days forgotten. Entire nervous prostration ensues, and recourse is had to a hydropathic institution. There the patient is dragged from his bed at break of day, driven staff in hand to the hillside or the river-side, and provided only with the simplest and coarsest fare; and he recovers by precisely the same instrumentality of which he had scorned to avail himself at home.

In many cases the system which really does nothing may seem successful, because all that the patient needs is a revulsion of feeling, a hopeful frame of mind, and the continued operation of causes that have already begun to take effect. The subject of chronic disease may have taken medicine enough, the active force of the malady may be subdued, and still the morbid habitude of the system may linger because courage is lost, energy crippled, and the animal spirits permanently depressed. In this state the resort to a new practitioner who is unsparing in his promises may furnish the only essential requisite, and bread pills or colored water from his hand would restore the patient as promptly and as effectually as the nostrums that are actually administered. We once knew an ignorant and intemperate sailor who had the audacity to advertise himself as a physician for incurables. His door was besieged by

crowds from afar and near. Many who had been given over by regular physicians recovered, and many more, whose days were numbered, were stimulated to a seeming convalescence. But the man was too notoriously an ignoramus to administer anything more salutary, and probably too cunning to administer anything less salutary, than hope. Indeed, one of the strongest cases on his list was in this wise. A woman, reputedly at death's door in consumption, and unable to go to the *soi-disant* physician, sent a description of her case by a friend. A bottle of pretended medicine was given him with directions. The bottle was insecurely corked, and the messenger found to his dismay that the precious liquor had escaped. He paused at a turbid pool by the roadside and filled the bottle. Its contents were duly swallowed, the patient recovered rapidly, and when she was entirely well was first informed of the innocent fraud of which she had been the dupe and the beneficiary.

Many are captivated by the seeming completeness and pretended certainty of new medical systems, and make it a reproach against regular practitioners that they confess their frequent ignorance, and acknowledge that their most confident calculations are sometimes baffled. We, on the other hand, feel always reassured by the modesty and magnanimity of this confession. It is a mark of true science. It indicates the essential condition of the healing art, groping its cautious way among the complexities of a system so fearfully and wonderfully made, that there is but one book in which all its members are written, and but one eye to which all its mysteries are clear. The pretence that all is known which can be known, the proffer of unfailing specifics, the attempt to reduce medical science to a complete practical system, is proof positive of ignorance or of imposture.

We trust that we have not transcended our rightful province in entering our plea in behalf of the medical faculty. We confess our own ignorance; we know that the issues of life and death are in the hands of God; but we believe that the members of this profession are the honored instruments in his hands for averting sickness, and rolling back the shadow of death. Long and careful observation has given us increasing confidence in the wisdom and skill of those who claim to be

legitimate successors of the great fathers of medical science ; and if there be a class of men who, with rare exceptions, deserve the undivided trust, esteem, and love of the whole community, that class is the regular physicians of New England.

Dr. Holmes's volume now before us derives its title from the paper with which it opens,—an Address delivered before the Massachusetts Medical Society at its last annual meeting. The drift of this discourse sets in the same direction with that delivered twenty-five years earlier by Dr. Bigelow, on Self-Limited Diseases. Within this quarter of a century there has been a silent, gradual revolution in the best medical practice, which from being active and heroic has become expectant. We were wont at the commencement of this period to see acute disease fought against with a vehemence greater than its own, and it was little matter what battle-scars from lancet, leech, and blister the patient carried through life, or what a stock of mineral poison was laid up in his bones, if the dividing line between the death of the disease and the death of its subject were not overpassed. We have often been reminded of the labors of the fireman in witnessing those of the active and skilful physician. We have seen heads that looked like shapeless logs of charred wood under the caustic treatment for erysipelas, and the pressure of fingers employed for hours to prevent jets of blood from starting, through incisions in the jugular vein on both sides the neck, in the convulsive breathing of a croup-stricken infant ; and we have witnessed the raising up of patients from the very shadow of death through these fearful processes. Our own careful and calculating, though non-professional observation, leads us to believe that the proportion of recoveries under that severe treatment was full as great as under the more gentle methods now employed. But we cannot doubt that the quantity of life restored is much greater now than under the excessive depletion and medication formerly in use. It is impossible that the vital energy, the power of resistance and endurance, should not have been in many instances permanently impaired by modes which almost killed that they might cure. We believe that the change would represent itself most manifestly in the vital statistics of the whole community,

had it not been counteracted by the rapid growth of other classes of letiferous causes, such as the more excited and tumultuous life of our time, the discontinuance of ventilation through the open chimney, the increase of luxury, and the adulteration of food and liquors. It cannot be denied that, while physicians have laid more and more emphatic stress on hygiene, its conditions have been increasingly violated by the public at large. In no one respect but the freer use of the bath have the habits of the community undergone a favorable change. We quote from Dr. Holmes his estimate of the relative value of hygiene and medication.

“Medication without insuring favorable hygienic conditions, is like amputation without ligatures. I had a chance to learn this well of old, when physician to the Broad Street district of the Boston Dispensary. There, there was no help for the utter want of wholesome conditions, and if anybody got well under my care, it must have been in virtue of the rough-and-tumble constitution which emerges from the struggle for life in the street gutters, rather than by the aid of my prescriptions.

“But if the *materia medica* were lost overboard, how much more pains would be taken in ordering all the circumstances surrounding the patient (as can be done everywhere out of the crowded pauper districts), than are taken now by too many who think they do their duty and earn their money when they write a recipe for a patient left in an atmosphere of domestic malaria, or to the most negligent kind of nursing! I confess that I should think my chance of recovery from illness less with Hippocrates for my physician and Mrs. Gamp for my nurse, than if I were in the hands of Hahnemann himself, with Florence Nightingale or good Rebecca Taylor to care for me.

“If I am right in maintaining that the presumption is always against the use of noxious agents in disease, and if any whom I might influence should adopt this as a principle of practice, they will often find themselves embarrassed by the imperative demand of patients and their friends for such agents where a case is not made out against this standing presumption. I must be permitted to say, that I think the French, a not wholly uncivilized people, are in advance of the English and ourselves in the art of prescribing for the sick without hurting them. And I do confess that I think their varied *ptisans* and syrups are as much preferable to the mineral regimen of bug-poison and ratsbane, so long in favor on the other side of the Channel, as their art of preparing food for the table to the rude cookery of those hard-feeding and much-dosing islanders. We want a reorganized *cuisine* of invalidism per-

haps as much as the culinary reform, for which our lyceum lecturers, and others who live much at hotels and taverns, are so urgent. Will you think I am disrespectful if I ask whether, even in Massachusetts, a dose of calomel is not sometimes given by a physician on the same principle as that upon which a landlord occasionally prescribes bacon and eggs, — because he cannot think of anything else quite so handy? I leave my suggestion of borrowing a hint from French practice to your mature consideration." — pp. 39 — 41.

Next in the volume we have Dr. Holmes's two Lectures on Homœopathy and its Kindred Delusions, delivered and published in 1842. The first of these lectures treats of the Royal Cure of the Scrofula, the Weapon Ointment and the Sympathetic Powder, the Tar-water mania of Bishop Berkeley, and the Metallic Tractors of Perkins. The history of the Tractors forms one of the most instructive chapters in the annals of pseudo-medical science. Perkins published no less than five thousand well-authenticated cases of cure, yet the efficacy of these instruments suddenly ceased when the public credulity was disenchanted, and no fact can be more certain than that they were entirely destitute of power, whether for good or for evil. The second Lecture is an argumentative discussion of the two primitive postulates of Homœopathy, namely, that "like cures like" (*similia similibus curantur*), and that the efficacy of medicinal substances is in the ratio of their attenuation or dilution. These propositions are subjected to a manifold *reductio ad absurdum*, till they are left without the shadow of a possibility in their favor. We apprehend that these fundamental canons of homœopathy are now obsolete with a large portion of its practitioners. They are implicitly believed by the very ignorant members of the fraternity, and by many non-professional persons of all grades of culture. But the thoroughly-educated physician of this school cares no more than the allopathist for the effect of his remedies on a person in health, and prefers highly-concentrated to diluted medicines. We apprehend that this class of practitioners administer active poisons oftener, and in stronger doses, than their brethren of the old *régime*. These Lectures are followed by a keen and caustic review of a new manual of Homœopathy.

The next paper is on the contagious or infectious character  
VOL. XCIII. — NO. 192. 18

of Puerperal Fever. The author, by a wide induction of cases, proves that this disease has undoubtedly been carried from house to house by physicians and nurses, even after the lapse of several days, and under circumstances which would attach the strongest *a priori* improbability to such communication,—in fine, that its virus is subtle and persistent to a degree wholly unparalleled by the diseases ordinarily regarded as contagious. He pleads earnestly and eloquently with his professional brethren, not for added precautions, but for their absolute refusal to render their professional services where there is any possibility of their conveying pestilence and death in their persons or garments. For this treatise, as humane as it is learned and able, he has encountered in some quarters ridicule and opprobrium, and now, in what is the third edition of his *Essay*, he deals severe justice to his opponents, and as it seems to us utterly takes from them the power of a rejoinder. Indeed, the whole history of professional warfare presents hardly a single case in which an adversary's guns have been spiked so neatly and so hopelessly. In an *Address on the Position and Prospects of the Medical Student*, he recurs to this subject in the following strong, but not over-strong terms.

“ From the facts I have exposed elsewhere, it appears that the medical attendant has a power of doing mischief which has sometimes proved enormous. He may carry a pestilence about with him from house to house, that shall kill more women in a month than he is like to save in his whole life: there is too great reason to fear that he has done so often. Look over the tremendous series of cases proving what I say, and then, if a question should ever arise between your private advantage and a score or two of innocent lives, remember that you have been warned against adding your names to the list of those who, with a smile upon their faces, have carried death from bedside to bedside, sometimes ignorantly and innocently, and sometimes negligently, if not criminally; but compared to whom Toffana was a public benefactress, and the Marchioness of Brinvilliers a nursing mother! ”— pp. 305, 306.

The remaining contents of the volume are an article on the Mechanism of Vital Action, which first saw the light in this journal, and a Valedictory Address to the Medical Graduates of Harvard University, delivered at the Medical Commencement of 1858.

In addition to the great merits of this volume taken collectively, we are strongly impressed with the adaptation of Dr. Holmes's style and method to his office as a professor and lecturer. No man could be less chargeable with ambiguity than he. He shuns the parade of technical terms, yet uses them freely when they are needed for precision of statement and clearness of reasoning. His style is familiar, yet always dignified, and easily melts into pathos, swells into lyric rhythm, or grows majestic, with the demands of his subject,—always facile in his hands for the expression of the thought or sentiment to which it gives shape. What impresses us most of all in these discourses is the author's profound sense of the humane mission of the medical faculty, and his own unforced and unfeigned sympathy with the sufferings which it is his office to relieve. Some physicians treat the themes within the cognizance of their art as wholly impersonal, and as if muscles, nerves, and organs existed only for their manipulations, and for the cause of science. Dr. Holmes never forgets that he is discussing the members, liabilities, and morbid affections of a suffering body, and that his science exists for its uses, and should be cultivated for humanity's sake. We cannot forbear quoting the following passage for the generous sympathy which it expresses for the unfortunate. We trust that the occasion for the merited rebuke it conveys ceased with its utterance.

"The amphitheatre for surgical operations is the scene of tortures which should never be undervalued, however familiar the sight of them may have grown to the seasoned student. That act of frightful violence to a fellow-creature which you call a 'brilliant operation,' may be the twentieth or the fiftieth of the kind you have witnessed. You are used to such sights, and it is hard to realize that others are not used to such sufferings. Do you remember that this seemingly brief space of mortal anguish has been for months or years the one waking and sleeping terror of the poor victim of disease before you,—that, like the iron chamber of the story, this dreadful necessity has been narrowing closer and closer about him day by day, at every approach darkening some window of life and happiness, and now in the midst of fearful sights and sounds is lacerating his convulsed fibres, and pouring out his smoking heart's-blood? Do you remember how long the memory of this little period will blend with all his thoughts, how every kind look he received will be treasured in his heart, how every careless word will be

recalled, how every thoughtless cruelty will leave its scar deeper than the terrible seams of the knife and the cautery?

"I have not left my stated pursuits, at your kind request, to come before you either for the sake of bestowing flattery or receiving applause. To you, and through you to your fellow-students, I must offer a few words, which, as they come from my heart and my conscience, I will not dishonor by introducing with an apology.

"In the many operations I have attended in the hospitals of France and England, often in the midst of a crowd of students more numerous and less orderly in their deportment than are ever found in the hospitals of our own country, I never but once heard the ordinary theatrical expression of applause at the close of an operation, and it was then immediately and indignantly silenced. Is it necessary for me to inform you that the same manner of expressing approbation has more than once manifested itself on this side of the Atlantic, and even in one of our own public institutions?

"If I should see to-morrow in the journals, or in any popular work, a statement of this fact, and an appeal to the feelings of the public on the point, I should expect a simultaneous expression of surprise and disgust to echo through the whole community. Far be it from me to make this appeal to the public; I had rather speak of the fact directly to the faces of those whose duty it is to support the honor of the medical profession. But were an exposure and public denunciation of this truly barbarous practice to appear in any popular publication, I, for one, should be disinclined and unable to say one word in defence of those who had armed every thinking man, much more every gentle-hearted woman and pitying child, against them. No! The listeners to this address may receive it with applause, or hisses, or silence, as they please. The spectators of a drama, the audience of a concert, may express their delight by ringing plaudits, if they choose. But there is a limit where decency requires us to refrain from indulging our impulses. We do not think it necessary to honor the utterer of an impressive prayer with a round from the floor and galleries of the house of worship. Do so, do so a thousand times before you thus violate the peaceful walls devoted to the languishing and dying poor! Spare your noisy honors to the sanguinary triumphs of the art of mutilation, while the neglected *subject* lies panting in his blood before you. Do you ask who constituted me a critic or a censor in this matter? I answer, God, who made me a man; society, which imposed my duties; my nature, not palsied to sympathy; my profession, not yet degraded beneath that of the gladiator. Better that one of your own number should speak out, than wait for the cheap newspaper and the philanthropic novel-writer; better humanize our own

manners than have our fellow-citizens say of the physician as the early Romans of Archagathus: *transiisse nomen in carnificem*,—that his name is changed to that of butcher; better keep a becoming quiet within the asylum of disease, than have the passers-by who hear its floors rattling with tumultuous applause, break in upon us, thinking to enjoy an hour of private theatricals, and start with horror to find that such is the tribute of youthful sympathy to a bleeding wretch, broken upon the wheel of Science, for the crime of a disease she could not master by her remedies!" — pp. 311—314.

Since we commenced our labors on Dr. Holmes's book, we have received the volume which holds the second place in the caption of this article. More precious than virgin gold are Dr. Jackson's recorded words in the esteem of the many who, in resorting to his transcendent skill as a physician, have learned to admire and revere him as equally sage, patriarch, and saint. A few years ago he published a series of seventeen "Letters to a Young Physician." The principal paper in this volume is an eighteenth letter, occasioned by Dr. Holmes's Address on "Currents and Counter-Currents in Medical Science," and the strictures upon it. With regard to the utility of active medication, Dr. Jackson, as might have been anticipated, shuns extremes. He condemns the over-medication customary in his youth; yet he is not prepared to second Dr. Holmes in his willingness to have all drugs sunk in the sea. He pleads especially for mercury, antimony, opium, and quinine, and enters into a somewhat detailed statement of the circumstances under which they are respectively useful, and the special services they perform for the diseased system. He maintains the expediency even of what is termed the heroic treatment in the earliest stages of certain maladies; but he adds that, in by far the greater number of instances, the physician is not called till the proper time for such treatment has gone by. The letter fills nearly a hundred pages. It is rambling, discursive, touching on a great diversity of topics, and manifestly designed to group around the nucleus furnished by Dr. Holmes various professional subjects on which the author had a word to say to his younger brethren. In a note he gives us extracts from a letter to Sir John Forbes, occasioned by Sir John's article on

Homœopathy, in the British and Foreign Medical Review for January, 1846.

The other notes — all of them interesting — are an account of the infancy of John Lowell, a nephew of the author, the founder of the Lowell Lectures, who, when regarded as hopelessly ill of *cholera infantum*, became Dr. Jackson's first patient, and seems to have been treated by the young practitioner with all the skill of his maturer years, and the prudence of his old age ; a sketch of the character of Rebecca Taylor, for thirty-four years a nurse in the Massachusetts General Hospital, and in every respect a model nurse ; and an article concerning the late Mr. Prescott, containing an account of the original injury to his eye, the subsequent attacks of ophthalmic disease, and the attacks of paralysis, the second of which proved fatal.

The closing paper in this volume is a “ Memoir on the Last Sickness of General Washington, and its Treatment by the Attendant Physicians,” prepared at the request of Hon. Edward Everett, and appended by him to his Life of Washington. This paper is interesting and gratifying, inasmuch as it is a defence of Dr. Craik and his medical friends from the charge of malpractice, by one who is perhaps better fitted than any other man living to pass judgment on the record of the case. He supposes that the disease had advanced beyond the control of remedies before Dr. Craik's arrival at the bedside of his friend, and expresses the belief that the treatment employed by him, though not likely to prove successful, was that to which a prudent physician would have looked as the last resort.

We will close our notice and our article by quoting Dr. Jackson's summary of results in his eighteenth Letter : —

“ To what conclusions have we arrived ? First. I have admitted the abuses of medicine. It is, though much less than formerly, given too much as a matter of course to all who apply to the physician for aid ; and powerful drugs are administered too often, without bearing in mind that they will certainly do some harm. This certain evil should be compared with the uncertain benefit which we are justified in expecting from them. It becomes every medical man to keep these considerations fairly before his mind, when making his prescriptions. I have flattered myself that we are not peculiarly subject to reproach

on this head, in this region of the civilized world. But I know how readily all men take to their hearts such sweet flatteries as this.

“Secondly. I have endeavored to point out the importance of resorting to what I have called the hygienic treatment, in all cases admitting the use of it. This I have recommended especially in chronic diseases, maintaining that, in very many cases, the best chance for relief may be found in the promotion of the general vigor. By this the system may be enabled to overcome the disease; or, where this cannot be done, to delay as long as possible its fatal termination.

“Thirdly. I have expressed my conviction that by medical treatment, often by the efficient use of powerful drugs, sometimes by blood-letting, we may frequently succeed in diminishing the violence, in lessening the suffering, and in shortening the duration of diseases. But I have distinctly stated, and as forcibly as I could, that it was only at the commencement of a disease that the treatment above described could be employed with any just hope of success. In doing this, I hope that I have been clearly understood as referring to the first days of the actual disease, not to the first days of the physician’s attendance on it.

“Fourthly. I have brought into view the self-limited diseases, of which Dr. Bigelow has treated, in which certain processes must be gone through, and which medicine cannot arrest. I have stated, however, that we can sometimes diminish the sufferings, and perhaps also the danger attending these diseases, when these are passing beyond certain boundaries. Otherwise, these diseases are to be left to their own course, only guarding against such things as would aggravate or prolong them.

“Fifthly. When diseases are brought under the treatment of a physician after the period during which active measures are found useful, or when such treatment has done all that it is capable of, the expectant mode of cure should be relied upon.” — pp. 88—90.